



Vol. 1.

March 2013

No. 1.

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# THE E-ZINE,

BEING THE MAGAZINE OF THE STUDENTS OF  
KING EDWARD VI ASTON SCHOOL

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*"Semper Iuvenes"*

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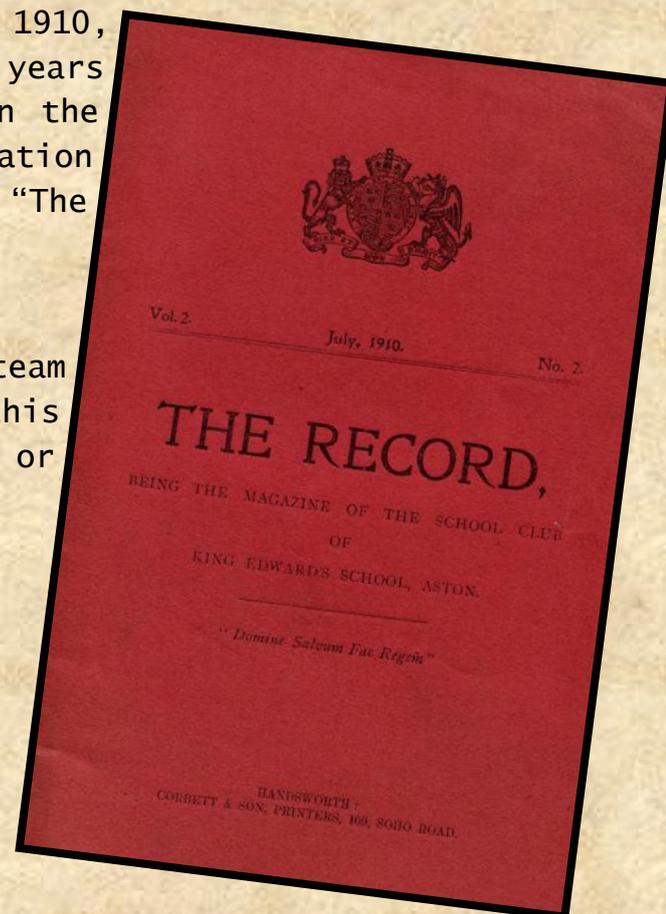
# HEADMASTER'S WELCOME

I am delighted to be writing the introduction to the first edition of the Aston E-Zine, the electronic and 'mischievous' younger brother of "The Record". The first edition of "The Record" was published in 1910 and its appearance each October is eagerly awaited by the whole school community. That the cover of the first edition of "The Record" is recognised in the design of this first edition of the Aston E-Zine is entirely appropriate emphasising that while over one hundred years apart, both magazines are produced by the students for the students and share very similar origins.

What the students of 1910 would make of the E-Zine is hard to say, however they would, I think, recognise a magazine that is trying to show the school as it really is and not how some would pretend. New technologies will undoubtedly allow the E-Zine to develop in ways that could not have been imagined in 1910, nevertheless I hope that over the coming years the publication fills a distinct niche in the life of the school and that its publication becomes as eagerly awaited as that of "The Record".

I would like to thank Mr McBrien and his team for all their hard work in producing this first edition. If you have any comments or suggestions, in fitting with the magazine, please e-mail them to:  
[r.mcbrien@keaston.bham.sch.uk](mailto:r.mcbrien@keaston.bham.sch.uk).

**C. Parker**  
Headmaster  
March 2013



# THE - TEAM



**Editorial** - Stewart Smith, Joe Connell, Bahez Talabani, Euan Healey, Saabir Petker & Joseph Burns

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**Caricatures** - Mathew Wilkes

**Cartoonist** - Joe Ford

**Special Thanks** - Mr Billings & the IT Department, Mrs Blakemore, Mrs Paradissis & Dr Taylor-Briggs

**Staff Editor** - R McBrien

# FILM REVIEWS

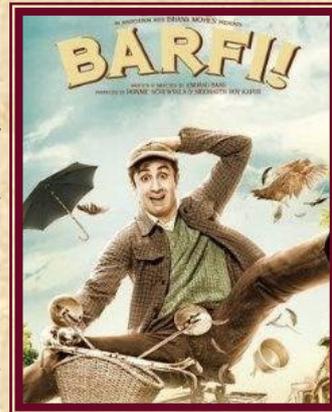
## The Avengers

Though plagued by the narrative shortcomings of all the Marvel cinematic universe films, the Whedonesque characterisation, Whedonistic dialogue and general smouldering aroma of Joss Whedon makes it all okay. Further hats off to Mark Ruffalo for his adorable turn as Bruce Banner, and Clark Gregg as the always-good Agent Coulson.



## Barfi!

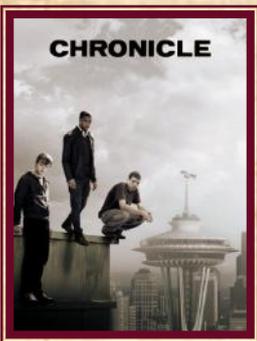
It may seem somewhat culturally ignorant to rate this film so highly with such a limited understanding of Bollywood cinema, but it genuinely seems to be one of the funniest, most imaginative and skilfully made films of the year. It straddles the line between slapstick, romantic and screwball comedy perfectly, with a potent dose of heartbreak and tragedy added in for good measure. All of this contributes to a probably unhealthy and erratic emotional response over the film's kaleidoscopic two and a half hours. The physicality of Ranbir Kapoor's acting as the titular character calls to mind a young Rowan Atkinson or Charlie Chaplin, his silent-era-esque scenes an absolute joy to watch. Even if by Bollywood standards it may not be top notch, its role as a perfect gateway piece to the Indian film industry warrants it Western praise nonetheless.



## CHRONICLE

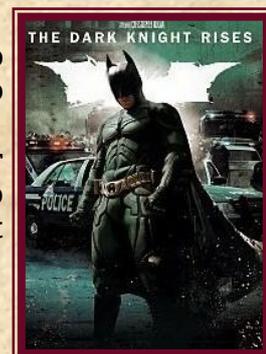
## Chronicle

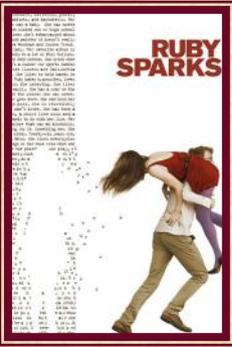
Blair Witch meets the superhero myth, reviving a genre that the Paranormal Activity franchise degraded from the innovative to the annoying. Essentially, a low budget shaky-cam flick that puts Cloverfield to shame, proposing what teenagers would really do with superpowers (hint: it doesn't end well).



## The Dark Knight Rises

The Dark Knight Rises is a divisive and unconventional ending to Christopher Nolan's bat-trilogy, but one which still manages to provide fine closure for the magnum opus of the superhero genre. Nolan proudly constructs a Lawrence of Arabia-scale epic for our times, and throws in a few subtle references to sixties Batman to prove it's not all about growling, brooding and quasi-fascist vigilantism.





### Ruby Sparks

The film is beautifully written by the wonderful Zoe Kazan, who also stars as the eponymous character brought into being by the words of Paul Dano's struggling writer. Ruby Sparks manages to be thoughtful, funny and at times emotionally distressing, but also thoroughly and irresistibly likeable, something which films of this type rarely manage to such an extent. Less shoehorned-in references to J.D. Salinger would be nice, but alas, nothing, not even Ruby, is perfect.

[See the trailers here!](#)



Joe Connell = Year 13



# STEW'S TOP 10

1. **The Shawshank Redemption**- Without doubt the greatest film of all time.
2. **The Sixth Sense**- A good film with one of the best, if not the best endings ever. It makes you question why you didn't figure it out before it happens which is why it is so good.
3. **The Dark Knight**- In my opinion it is easily the best batman film from the trilogy, mainly due to the incredible acting of the late Heath Ledger.
4. **Saving Private Ryan**- An emotional true story that really hits home what everyone really went through in the world wars.
5. **The Hurt Locker**- Despite all the hype behind Avatar, this won out on the Oscars front in the end. Based on a true story about a bomb diffuser in Afghanistan, it constantly keeps the viewer on edge. Topped off by a great acting performance from Jeremy Renner.
6. **The Hangover**- A hilarious film that you can watch over and over again...and it will still make you laugh.
7. **Taken**- An all action film that is mainly remembered for the quote "I will find you, and I will kill you". Liam Neeson converts to an action hero with ease in this movie. It's a shame 'Taken 2' couldn't live up to it.
8. **Shutter Island**- Di Caprio stars in this horror/mystery/action film, set in quite an unbelievable location on an island. Not all is what it seems!
9. **The Bourne Ultimatum**- The Bourne series is one of the few series that actually get better as they go along.
10. **The Mist**- A pretty average attempt at a horror film on an obviously low budget; however the ending of the mist makes sure you won't forget it.



Stewart Smith = Year 12



# HICKEN

# FAJITA

## Ingredients

½



Lime

1 Clove Garlic

½ Green Chilli or ½ - 1 tsp Cajun Spice

Small Bunch Coriander

1 x 10ml spoon Oil

1 small Chicken Breast (or 3-4 thighs)

½ Red Onion

½ Green Pepper

1 Tomato

25g Cheddar Cheese

2 Tortillas

1 x 15ml spoon Guacamole (or Salsa, Sour Cream),  
Optional

## Equipment

Juice squeezer, garlic press, 2 chopping boards, 2 knives, small bowl, 2 spoons, weighing scales, grater, measuring spoons, frying pan.

## Method

1. Prepare the marinade: squeeze the lime; peel and crush the garlic; de-seed and slice the chilli; chop the coriander; stir everything together with the oil.
2. Remove any skin from the chicken and cut the chicken into thin strips. Mix with the marinade and place in the fridge, covered, until needed.
3. Prepare the remaining ingredients with a clean knife on a clean chopping board: slice the onion and green pepper; cut the tomato into quarters, remove the seeds and dice; grate the cheese.
5. Add the marinated chicken to the wok or frying pan and stir-fry for about 4 minutes. Check that the chicken is cooked.
6. Add the onion and green pepper and continue to cook for a further 2 minutes.
7. Spread a little chicken in the centre of the tortilla, add some tomato, cheese and guacamole, salsa and/or sour cream, then roll up.

## Top tips

Warm the tortillas in a microwave oven for 20 seconds. Go for extra vegetables, kidney beans, quorn or tofu for a vegetarian alternative. Other types of meat could be used, e.g. thin strips of beef or turkey.





# CLAUSTROPHOBIQUE



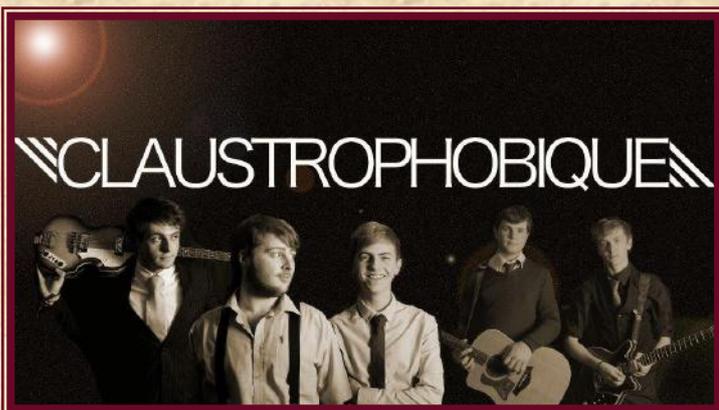
"We're like Radiohead but mixed with AC/DC, and Queen. But nothing like Radiohead, really." These were the first words I heard about the band I had come to see on my 19th birthday, spoken by the lead singer, Alex Light, to a local newspaper reporter. Later that night I realised his description, laced with hubris and fuelled by teenage frivolity, were more accurate than anyone watching could have realised. Claustrophobique were amazing.



Formed by KE Aston students Joe Maisey, Guy O'Brien and Andrew Hinton, Claustrophobique played host to a number of additions to their line-up before settling with Alex Light as lead singer and 'yours truly' as bassist. Beginning in small venues in Sutton Coldfield, none of us could believe where we ended up - headlining the O2 Academy 2 in Birmingham on a Saturday night, a spot usually reserved for signed touring bands on major labels. From our humble beginnings in Guy's garage to the dizzying heights of the board outside the O2, we never forgot where we came from, and never forgot our friends and fans at Aston. Many of the band's biggest hits were written during classes at Aston itself, about people, places or events that took place during our time there, and it has to be said that the passion with which we performed was cultivated, nurtured and encouraged by the ethos of Aston, along with its staff.



The band has now been dissolved, each member heading off to their respective universities (or back to year 13, but we don't like to mention Alex's academic record) and each member has hopes of continuing their pursuit of greatness in music. As the school song says, "seas may soon divide the voices now united, the friends now side by side, but whereso'er we carry the pride of Edward's name, let each forget himself boys, and play to win the game." Looking back, that's a bigger influence than Radiohead by far.



*Yours Truly* - Jozef Doyle



# STUDENT COUNSELLOR

**What does your job involve?**

As a counsellor I see my role as providing a supportive and safe environment where I will listen to, and talk with students in order to support them through whatever is going on for them.

**How long have you been at Aston?**

This is my third year at the school.

**What days are you in school?**

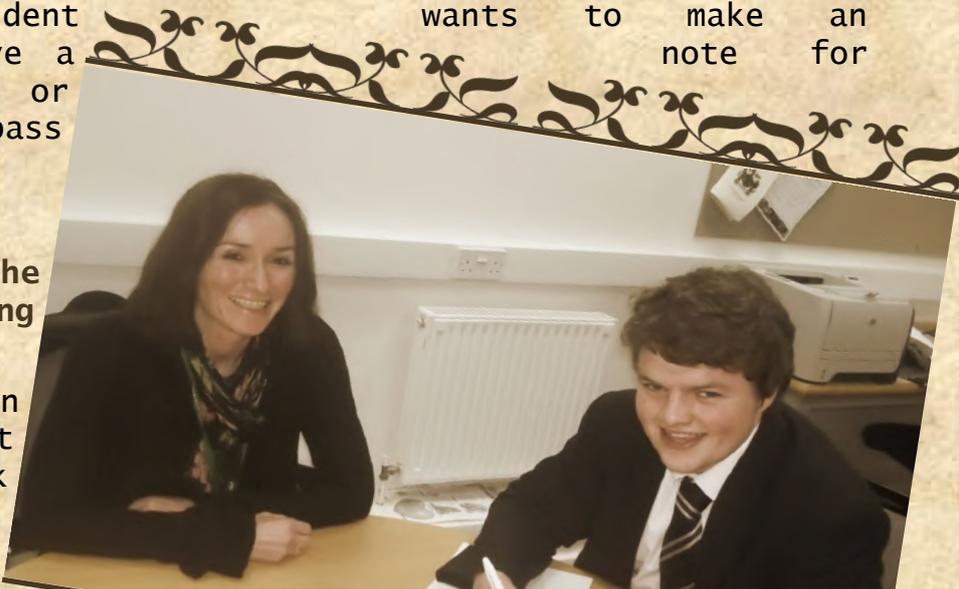
I am in school on Wednesday morning between 9am-1pm, in the office on the first floor of the main building, just beside the science classroom (C4).

**Can the students just come to you or do they have to make an appointment?**

Students can come along to my office without an appointment. If I am already with a student, there will be a note on the door to say I am in a meeting. If a student wants to make an appointment they can leave a note for me at student services, or they can ask a teacher to pass on the note.

**What do you think the students benefit from seeing you?**

Students have told me in the past that they find it useful being able to talk to someone who is not family or friends because they feel more free to express themselves.



Stewart Smith with KE Aston Counsellor, Jacquie

Sharing problems or concerns with a counsellor can help to see things in a clearer way. It may help students to see what is important to them and what options they have, for example if they want to change something in their life, or if they are coping with a difficult situation.

### Is what they say to you confidential?

As a counsellor, I offer a high degree of confidentiality. However, there are limits to this, which are there for the protection of students. Where a student is at risk of harm or is likely to harm themselves or another person or where I become aware of another child or young person to be at risk, I will have to share this with colleagues, in accordance with school and Open Door child protection safeguarding policy.

### What do you like most about Aston?

I really like the friendliness of everyone here. The staff are very helpful and supportive of the counselling service. Students are very polite. I also love the building, it reminds me of my old school, KEGS Handsworth, and so I think the building holds some nostalgia for me.

### Do you think your role in the school could develop?

I'm not sure, but I am open to suggestions. I am noticing that more students are coming to see me compared to when I first started here, 3 years ago. I feel that this is a good thing as maybe students are feeling that it is ok to come to counselling. But it may mean that there is a need for increasing the provision of counselling.

### Are there any websites or phone numbers you could recommend for students who find it hard to come and see you?

I have listed some numbers below, however, I would say to students who might want to come along but finding it difficult, maybe just come along to my office, and say hello. That might be the first step.

Open Door (this is the agency I work for)  
[www.opendooryouthcounselling.org.uk](http://www.opendooryouthcounselling.org.uk)

Tel: 0121 454 1118

Here we offer counseling for anyone under the age of 26 years old. We have an office near to the city centre. Students can telephone the agency themselves. We offer appointments in the day time or in the evening. There is a waiting list, but we will offer an appointment as soon as we can.

### Other organisations include:

- ◆ **The Samaritans:**  
[www.samaritans.org/](http://www.samaritans.org/)  
 Tel: 0121 666 664 444
- ◆ **Childline:**  
[www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx)  
 Tel: 0800 1111

# ROOM 101

## Mr Amaan

Don't get me started! If I had to pick just one, it would be any sports based radio debating forum, particularly any featured on Radio 5 live. These strike me as being phenomenally tedious, ponderous, self-important, and an execrable waste of everybody's time. It is depressing that such

protracted inanity and self-indulgent, soul destroying mediocrity is given the time of day, never mind an entire radio station with which to systematically degrade our quality of life.



## Miss Carter

I would like to put One Direction into Room 101. My reasons for this are because they have annoying, floppy hair which looks in need of a good brush. They somehow seem to have cracked America, when far better bands have failed. Girls seem to go all silly and swoon over them and probably spend too much money on tacky merchandise. And finally, they sing annoyingly catchy songs, so even when you don't like them the tunes get stuck in your head! Please put 1D in Room 101!



## Mr McBrien

On any given day I am probably quite capable of having 1001 random, mundane thoughts run through my little brain. These might range from

the functional 'which hand shall I use to pick up my toothbrush today?' to the philosophical 'Is this a ham and cheese sandwich or...*is it cheese and ham?*' That said, I just can't imagine I would ever feel the need to post these thoughts online in an hourly updated stream of drivel for all to see. Don't get me wrong, I quite like a bit of the old social networking, but just because you think something does not mean you automatically have to tell everyone. I would like to put online 'Mind Vomit' into Room 101.

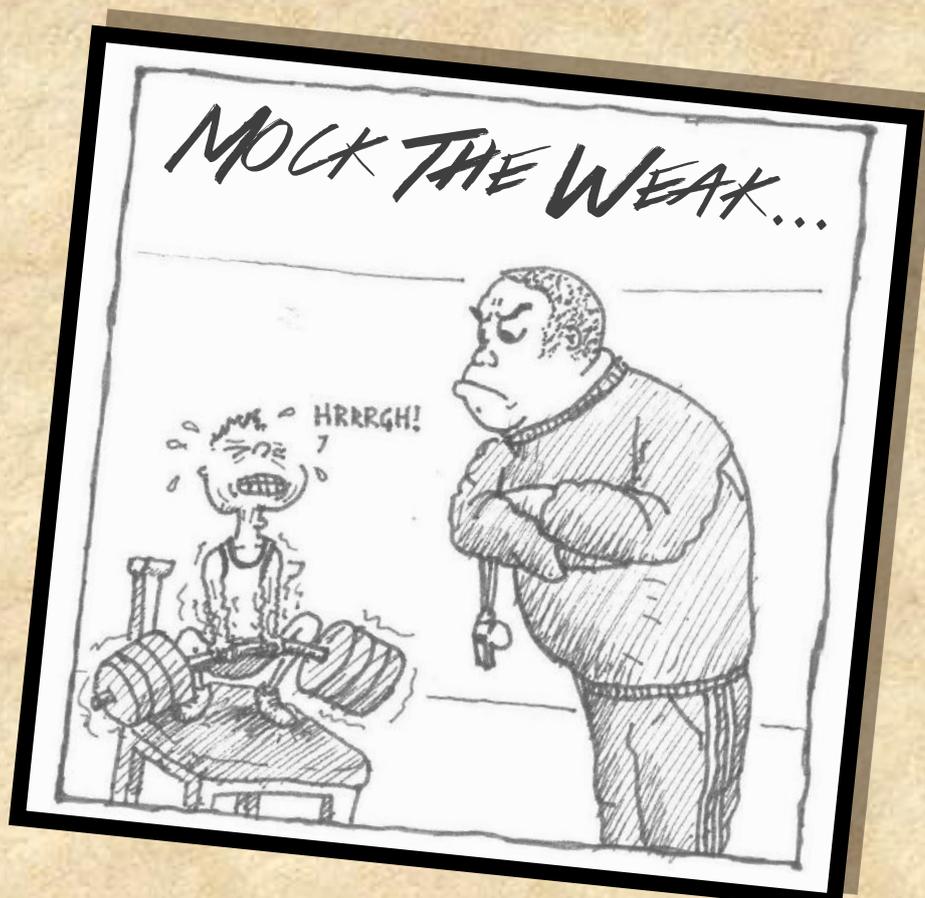


## Have your say!



Click on the link above to register your Room 101 vote.

One vote per Moodle account. Result revealed on Wednesday 1st May 2013



# HARRY'S AMPS

## Pedals

Distortion++ (known by my friends more familiarly as Geoff) is a very simple overdrive pedal, with one control

labeled "Death" that

instead of only going up to ten, goes to 11. This makes it one better than all other pedals, unless they also have 11 written on them.

High Octane (known by my friends as Keith) is a really nasty (in a good way) octave-fuzz pedal that doubles the frequency of your guitar signal so it sounds an entire octave higher than it really is. A side effect of this is some very unusual distortion that sounds like a small transistor radio that is running out of battery power.

## Amps

The Pignose 7-100 is a battery powered amp that I bought on eBay very cheap as "parts or not working". When I received it, it was in such a state that I thought the little piggy wasn't going to make it. Fortunately, I was able to get it up and running again in no time and soon discovered that it is a vintage model that rolled off the production line in the early 90s, and so was worth over £100 [The 90's are vintage? - ed.]. I'm not going to sell it though as it is an indispensable tool

for testing pedals, and can take any abuse you can throw at it. It's also nice to use it in the garden and has strap buttons, so you can sling it over your shoulder and walk (or run) around with it.

WBA (Wine Box Amp) is, as the name implies, a guitar amplifier built into a Chateaufeuf Du Pape box, and uses a metal chassis that was rescued from a broken package-deal type practice amp I found when helping a friend clear out his garage. Originally it was powered by a single nine-volt





it was a lot harder to assemble and definitely not for a beginner. It sounded a lot better and had much more musical distortion that didn't just increase with volume, but was controllable and achievable at any level. The main reason for this was, undoubtedly, the inclusion of a valve to colour the sound of the guitar and add warm, natural overdrive instead of the harsh, unmusical sound of the silicon chip that I used before.

The Epiphone Valve Junior was another of my eBay purchases, and I bought it because I was looking for a smaller amp than my ridiculous 50 watt Marshall to quietly practice (or record) with at home. It is a 5 watt valve amp, so I had to take extra safety precautions when working on it as it runs on 300 volts and

stores fatal amounts of charge in big, scary capacitors for an indefinite amount of time after it has been switched off. It is a very popular amp for "modders" to tweak and a lot of info about modifications, and even mod-kits can be found online. Unmodified, it sounds good but not great, getting muddy when the volume is past half way. It also has several minor design flaws that mean that it is inefficient and hard on certain components. The first thing I did was correct all of these flaws so I wouldn't be wasting any money on new components. The next thing I did,

ironically, was to waste lots of money on a new speaker and transformer, as the stock speaker sounded like a fart in the bathtub and the old transformer is way too small and gets very hot when the amp is working hard. Those two changes made the biggest difference to its tone than any other and now it is at least twice as loud as it was before, as well as having more drive when turned up and costing half the amount it did in valve replacements.

### Instruments

I have made one instrument which is a one-string guitar that is made from another wine box, and is played with the neck of a wine bottle as a slide. Its main purpose is as a testbed for guitar pickups, as I am planning to build a guitar, not dissimilar to Eddie Van Halen's "Frankenstrat" out of cheap parts bought of eBay and some orange paint.



Harry Hall - Year 11

# AMNESTY

## AT ASTON

Amnesty International is an organisation which campaigns for Human Rights globally. On the 5th December 2012 the school Amnesty Society organised the very first Amnesty International Aston Show.

The show opened with a brief introduction about the background of Amnesty; what followed was a great night of entertainment. First up, was a drama featuring Amnesty members performing an adaptation of Monty Python's 'Argument Clinic' sketch. This performance went well and while Jonjo's laughter from the audience was possibly a little too jovial the show had got off to a great start.

The Monty Python sketch was followed by Year 12's very own Jonny Varma showing off his magic tricks. After two highly successful tricks from Jonny, the audience were determined to catch him out, but even Ms Millar's best efforts to humble Jonny were unsuccessful as he still conjured a fantastic trick which left him with a tremendous round of applause.

Whilst the next performers were setting up I took the opportunity to inform the audience about the underlying aim of the show tonight which was to sign off letters demanding a re-trial for Hakamada Iwao, a Japanese man who has been on death row for an astonishing 44 years for crime which many (including his judge), believe he did not commit.

Next up, Mr Amann's professional jazz band produced an excellent performance reminding the audience just why many hold the band in such high regard. The band featured Mr Amann's son on the drums, who left many, including me, wishing they could play drums like that.

Following the jazz performance there was a 15 minute interlude where refreshments were provided by the Parents Association, with all money raised being donated to Amnesty.





The show recommenced with a short promo for the forthcoming joint school production of *Les Miserables*. A fantastic acapella performance from Rennel, a captivating duet from Euan and Nadi, a passionate solo from Megan and an exquisite performance from Jonjo resulted in everyone in the hall eagerly anticipating this year's school production. The production is on show in March.

The *Les-Mis* performance was followed by two short but splendid solos from Myron Wong who once again demonstrated his unique talent on piano and cellist Joe Dawson who even managed to keep Ms Millar's table silent with his fantastic playing.

The next performance was pure class as keen Amnesty International supporter Dr McKee rocked out the show in typical McKee style. Despite the difficulty in hearing his lyrics over his wicked guitar playing, the loud roar from the audience at the end of his performance reinforced just why Dr McKee is often referred to by some as M.C.Kee.

The next part of the show was the Amnesty Raffle with Rennel Purkis winning the £5 Argos voucher. On receiving it he stated, 'At least I made my money back.' The box of chocolates was won by Mrs Colley, but in her absence Jack Drury accepted the prize. The highly coveted Disney Princess Advent calendar went to Joe Zolna - who also broke the record on the night for the quickest recorded time of finishing an Advent Calendar. The top prize, £20, was won by Mr Rean who kindly re-donated the cash prize to Amnesty.

The show ended with what was meant to be a re-enactment of Monty Python's 'Dead Parrot' sketch. Possibly as a result of Martin Blatchford's sublime performance, James Mathieson was unlucky enough to forget his words as he, like many in the audience, were captivated by Martin's awesome attempt at a foreign accent.

All in all there were areas in which the show could have been better, primarily attendance. Ultimately, the team and I had a fantastic time organising the event and we are very proud of our achievements, which include over 40 signed letters to be sent off to the Japanese authorities and over £200 for Amnesty International.

*NB- The next Amnesty show is set to take place around December 2013, if there are any acts who would like to be involved (students or teachers) please contact me.*

### Special Thanks to:

- ◆ The Performers
- ◆ Connor Doyle (for his work on the programme)
- ◆ The Amnesty Team
- ◆ All those that attended/ contributed to the show

**Bahez Talabani**  
Chairman of Aston Amnesty Society



# STUDENT

# APPS

The YouSRC website allows you to create applications and then run them. I had to create all the images and sounds myself and upload them to use them in my app. I had a lot of fun creating the app and it helped me a lot with learning many programming techniques. My app was a fairly simple rock, paper, scissors game that was coded in the ELC programming language. Hope you enjoy!

huw Tallis = Year 12



Forest Escape



Rock Paper Scissors



Randomaze

Earth Attack





# R. WELSBY'S

# TRACKS

1. Stuck in the Middle (Remix) 
2. Chicada Rise 
3. Busy Day 



# TEAM

## FORTRESS II

Team Fortress 2 (TF2) is a fast-paced, Free-to-Play First-Person Shooter. In my opinion, it is one of the very best games out on the market. It combines endless maps, not only made by the brilliant Valve game developers, but also community-made maps. The Trading system in TF2 also sets it apart from many other FPS games. On the surface it may seem that there is not much of a story, simply 'RED' fighting 'BLU', however, reality is very different. To start, I will begin with a brief overview on how the game works. There are nine classes, and each class has its own role, background, strengths and weaknesses. The nine classes are as follows: Scout, Soldier, Pyro, Demoman, Heavy, Engineer, Medic, Sniper and Spy.

Scout is a very fast class; in fact, he is the fastest of all of the classes. Scout's role is to capture points or intelligence. However, I believe that Scout can be very effective at being extremely annoying to the opposing team, and buy valuable time in game modes such as Payload. Scout does not have much health, so remember to keep on the move and only play when attacking!

Soldier is a very balanced class, being one of the slowest characters, he makes up for this by carrying an effective rocket launcher. Soldier is easy to understand, but hard to master. Soldier's role is mainly to attack, however, he is not the workhorse of the team.

Pyro is quite a fun class to play as. Pyro's main role is to be a close-quarters ambush-style class. Pyro can also use its air blast to use enemy soldiers' rockets away from them, or extinguish teammates.

Demoman is a demolitions expert - Well done Sherlock! He is very good at destroying enemy strongpoints, such as an engineer's sentry nest, or just multiple campers. His

grenade launcher is very effective at medium ranges and has a lot of splash damage to make sure that nobody is left. You could also use the sticky-bomb launcher to deal even more damage, however, it takes time to get all of the 'stickies' on target, and the enemy may be able to destroy them before you can detonate!

Heavy is big, fat and has a giant minigun, there isn't really a lot to him - just point and spray, but keep your trusty Sandvitch or medic nearby, as you're a bullet-magnet!

Engineer is one of my favourite classes, and his teleports are



essential for a team's offense, and his sentry gun essential for a team's defence. As an engineer, you can really turn the tide of battle. This is because your sentry can, if placed effectively, take multiple Demo-Uber (Demoman and an Uber-charged medic) combos.

Medic is also one of the musts for a team. Medic obviously heals his team, and his Uber-charges make the medic and whoever he is healing invincible for a period of time.

Sniper is a long-range class, no surprise there. His role is to kill High-Value Targets, such as people pushing the cart in payload, or simply making sure that medic doesn't get to use his Ubercharge.

Spy is the ninth class and probably the one which trolls people the most. You can disguise as others, turn invisible, destroy sentry nests with sappers and backstab enemies for a one-hit kill.

Throughout playing the game you will receive items. This happens roughly every 20 minutes. These items are usually weapons - if you get a hat - you're lucky! Before I talk about hats, I will go over some of the weapons that you may want to use. Every weapon depends on your style of play, for instance, if you manage to hit your target almost every time (directly - no splash damage) as soldier, then you may want to try the Direct Hit. A must for every soldier is the Escape plan; this weapon lets you escape from battle quickly if you are hurt, as the less health you have, the faster you are. A must for Heavies is the Sandvitch, as this lets you regain all of your health on consumption.

The Huntsman is a lot of fun if you are playing as Sniper. This bow and arrow lets the sniper get into the heat of battle, and I believe makes sniper much more enjoyable. There are many more weapons for you to try out as you play, and you could always, if necessary, look just below the description of the weapon to find its stats. If there are no stats, it has the same stats as the regular (stock) weapons which you find when logged in.

Hats, hats, hats. Everybody wants hats. Hats are generally worth quite a lot in the TF2 Economy, and some are even worth hundreds of pounds in real life! Hats don't actually do anything to your character, just make them look better.

So, after all of that, I suggest that you at least try TF2, by downloading Steam on your computer and then downloading TF2. If you don't want it on your PC, then you can download it on PS3 and Xbox, however, there is much more of a community on the PC version. Remember this however, TF2 is a free-to-play game, however, if you want to wear hats and have a lot more hats, then you will have to buy something from the Mann Co store. Don't worry though, as there are some items available for as little as thirty pence.

Sam Breen -  
Year 9





# SKYFALL

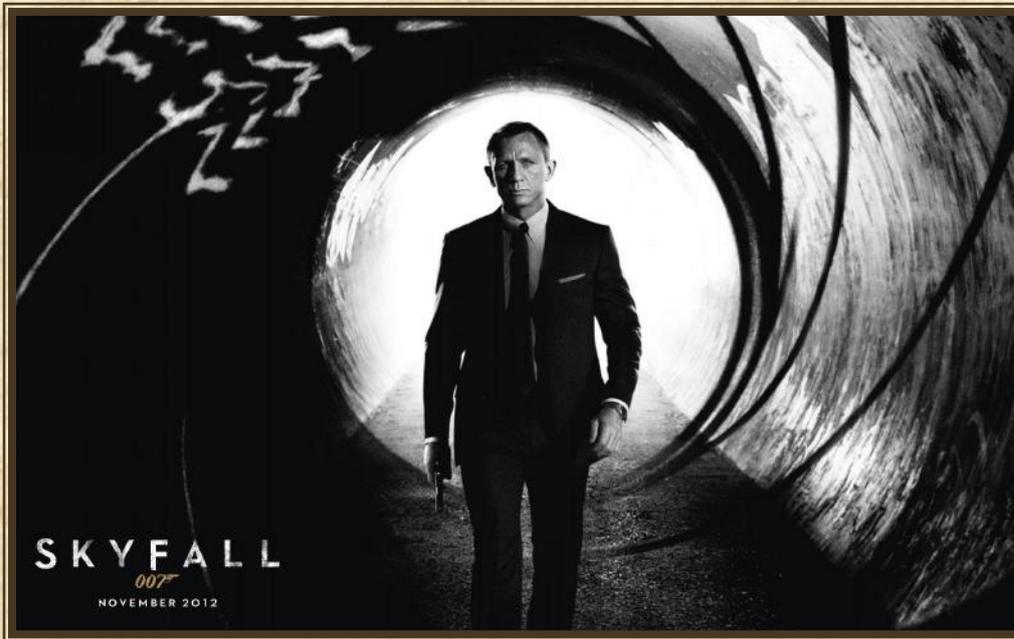
## REVIEW

The last time we saw Daniel Craig as England's favourite salacious superspy was in Danny Boyle's surprisingly good Olympics opening ceremony, where he parachuted out of a helicopter with the Queen. In many ways, the humorous scene was symbolic of the present incarnation of the James Bond franchise, accepted into the cultural norm in the same way that other questionable moral characters like Sir Paul McCartney and Sir Mick Jagger have been. Light-hearted patriotism aside, we last really saw Daniel Craig as Bond in Marc Foster's *Quantum of Solace*, but the plot was so forgettable (oil...water...maybe?) that the film is now basically irrelevant. Sam Mendes knows this, a director frankly too good for Bond, and starts *Skyfall* from scratch, taking Bond back to his roots for the franchise's 50th anniversary.

On a personal note, it basically debunks the Codename Theory, but it is still a Bond film through and through, more so than both of its Daniel Craig predecessors. Its charming final scene calls to mind the canon-reference in *The Dark Knight Rises'* epilogue, amongst a host of Nolanesque moments (in fact, it's a fascinating example of the Dark Knight trilogy's profound influence on modern cinema), re-establishing and practically rebooting the James Bond franchise. Indeed, it does this in ways *Casino Royale* never did, from Q's (Ben Whishaw) geek chic cardigan to the Julian Assange tactics of the film's villain, Raoul

Silva (Javier Bardem), rather than the somewhat ridiculous Texas Hold'em basis for Craig's first outing as Bond. Nevertheless, *Skyfall* remains ever faithful still to Mr Bond's more embarrassing aesthetics, the film shamelessly utilising irrelevant product placement -"Volkswagen Beetles Ma'am!"- and retaining the somehow patriotic lechery





synonymous with 007, even when it involves a practically enslaved former member of the Macau sex trade. Perhaps this is where the film falls short, its adherence to tried-and-tested formula, leading to a franchise as old as Bond falling into the trap of paying tribute to itself.

With that said, it's not a bad film at all, easily good enough to invalidate the head-scratching redundancy of *Quantum of Solace*, and a worthy entry in Craig's Bond sequence. And criticising any Bond film for being shameless, especially in the midst of 2012's endless Jubilee-Olympics-Adele jingoism, is probably futile - he's always going to be the questionable agent of cultural imperialism, even if he is far too old for it all (a sentiment the film thankfully reflects, even if it is only briefly). Is it the best Bond ever? It's probably the most realistic, and definitely the most self-aware, even if Mendes is limited somewhat in expressing those sentiments, though saying it is the best ever seems to be giving in to the hyperbolic patriotism associated with the film and the character. It's certainly the best modern Bond, with invisible cars, clown costumes and nonsensical space missions nowhere to be seen, helmed by a strong director who clearly knows what he is doing. *Skyfall* is certainly much better than the seedy, generic and shameless nature of the franchise might suggest, and so long as Daniel Craig doesn't enter a fifty-nine year old Roger Moore phase, his future as 007 is a bright one.

Joe Connell - Year 13

### Favourite 007 Theme Tunes

Miss Millar: You Know my Name - Chris Cornell 

Lewis Fraser: Goldfinger - Shirley Bassey 

Mr McBrien: A View to a Kill - Duran Duran 

Saabir Petker: The World is Not Enough - Garbage 

Mr Daniel: From Russia with Love - Matt Monro 

Sam Jackson: Live and Let Die - Paul McCartney & Wings 



# CLOTHES

## SHOW LIVE

On Tuesday 11th December students undertaking Art, DT or an artistic enrichment subject were given the opportunity to attend the 'Clothes Show Live!' at the NEC in Birmingham.



Upon arrival at the NEC we endured a brisk ten minute walk from the coach park to the main entrance accompanied by Mrs Simcox, Mr Healey and Miss Rawlins. We were ushered through the main doors and allowed to wander around the exhibition until the main fashion show started.

The exhibition spanned across several halls and the entire show was full at all times. There were plenty of stalls selling clothes, accessories, shoes and other items but also small stages which had fashion parades of clothing ranges by new contemporary designers that were small and often unheard of. Nonetheless, the designs they were showcasing were excellent and seemed to catch the eye of passers-by.

The main fashion show was themed around a fashion 'big-wig' and followed her life in the fashion world with scenes of photo-shoots in cities famous for its fashion like Milan; but also other aspects of the fashion world, not just designing. It showed how things like hair design and even lighting are key elements of the fashion industry. The whole display showed off a wide range of fashion designs through catwalks and musical performances.



After the main fashion show we continued looking round the exhibit until we once again suffered the long trek back to the coach. Overall the experience was extremely enjoyable. Whilst it took some of the boys out of their comfort zone, I thought the day was excellent and would definitely like to go to the show again.



Jonathan Pettifer = Year 11

### Gok Wan-a-be's Fashion Predictions 2013

- ◆ Bermuda shorts are sure to be hot this season for women who are looking for that 'ultra-chic, family-friendly and flattering look'.
- ◆ Black and white could become the next colour craze; it's easy to pull off, sleek enough for work yet glam enough for a night out.
- ◆ Stripes will make their return more prevalent than previous years especially for men giving the 'nautical, sea man feel'.
- ◆ The black tuxedo will be replaced with a navy colour all thanks to Tom Ford the American Designer.
- ◆ Finally, pop art will return from the sixties with big, bright and bold prints reminiscent of the magic eye challenge patterns.

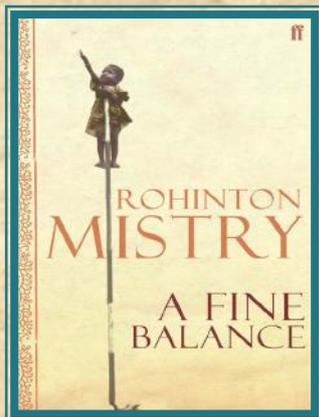
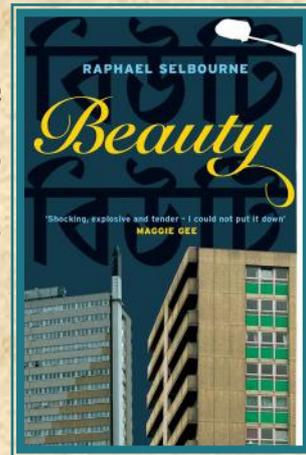




# BOOK REVIEWS

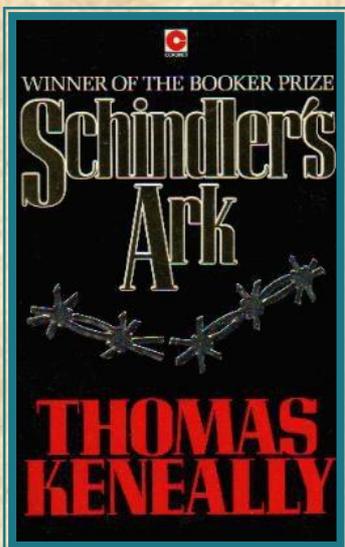
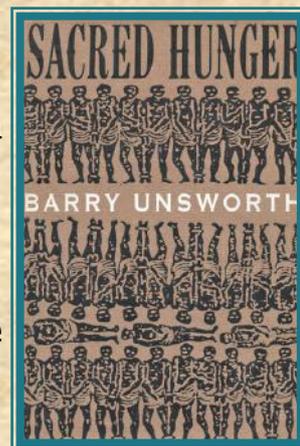
## ... MR. GURNEY

1. **'Beauty'** by **Raphael Selbourne**. One of the best books I've read for a long time. Gritty street realism and very moving. A Bangladeshi girl living in Wolverhampton flees her bullying brothers. A skinhead with an aggressive dog is surely going to be the last person to help her?



2. **'A Fine Balance'** by **Rohinton Mistry**. The best book my wife and I have read in the last 30 years! A young Hindu widow in Delhi has to take in two Muslim tailors as lodgers in order to cope financially. Doesn't sound thrilling, but it is! Also teaches you masses about India and all the tensions and struggles.

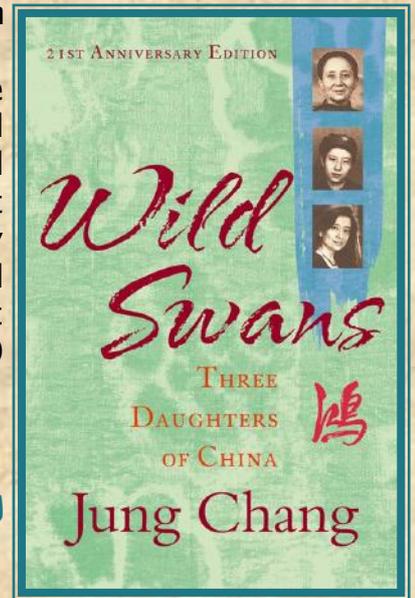
3. **'Sacred Hunger'** by **Barry Unsworth**. Slaves revolt on a ship taking them from Africa to slavery in the Caribbean. Brilliant! It did occasionally happen in real life.



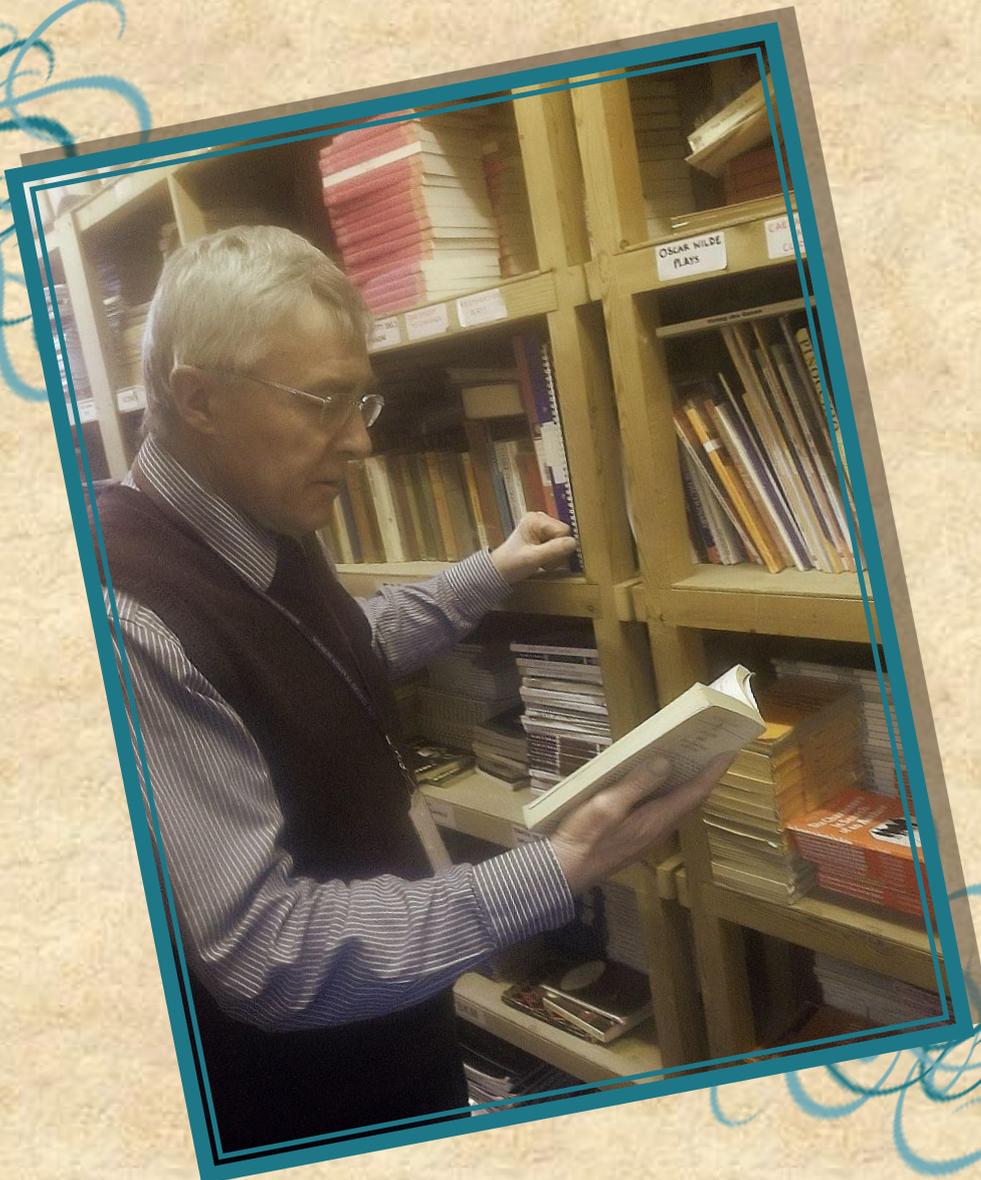
4. **'Schindler's Ark'** by **Thomas Keneally**. The most amazing true story about the Holocaust: a worthless German businessman --- boozier, gambler, womaniser --- uses local 'slave' labour in his factory in Krakow, Poland, keeping friendly with the Nazi SS. But one day he witnesses the clearing of the Jewish ghetto, and it fires off a spark of decency in him. He spends the rest of the war trying to save Jewish lives.

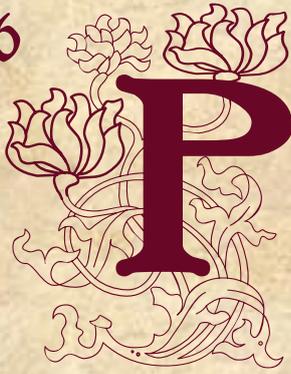
5. **'Wild Swans'** by **Jung Chang**. The true story of three generations of Chinese women, i.e. the author, her mother and grandmother. Grandmother was born to upper-class parents and had her feet broken at birth as was traditional to make her walk pigeon

-toed, which emphasised her status. Married off to an abusive army general, she fled with her daughter. The latter then became a communist to rid China of the old feudal cruelties. A faithful supporter of the party and its leader, Mao Tse-tung, she fought with him, and could not bring herself to waver from her loyalty, despite Mao's increasingly dictatorial egotism and crazy 'brainwashing' of the entire population. Jung Chang was one of the brainwashed 'Little Red Guards' but came to her senses and managed to flee to America. You learn so much about every aspect of 20th Century history and beliefs: why people embraced communism so passionately, etc. And the appalling truth about Mao: he was the biggest killer in world history (approx. 80,000,000 victims!).



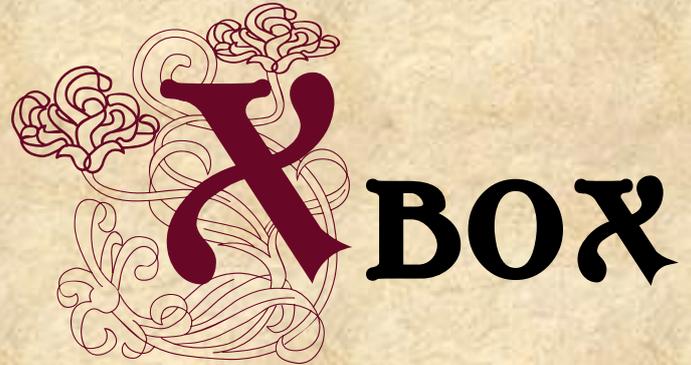
Mr Gurney





# PLAYSTATION

## VS



*"Playstaion is better because of the Free Online"*  
Christian Gallagher

*"Playstaion has better graphics"*  
Utkarsh Nayyar

*"Playstation is better as xBox has the red ring of death"*

*"xBox is better because of Kinect"*  
Yousuf Uddin

Owen Gill

*"xBox because of Halo"*  
Dincent Peters

*"PC is infinitely better than both of these"*  
Alex Mason

Name	Vote
Mrs Lay	Playstation
Mrs Whittall	Xbox
Mr Kilgallon	Xbox



### XBOX 360



### PlayStation 3



# MUSIC INTERVIEW

## MYRON WONG

**When did you begin your musical 'career' and how were you influenced to start?**

I started playing music when I was 5 years old and I was influenced by my aunty since she was a musician. She played a number of instruments and I liked listening to her. I play 5 instruments: Piano, Violin, Drums, Timpani, Xylophone and Marimba.

**Do you play as a hobby or would you like to make a career out of it?**

I would like to be a teacher or a musical artist.

**We also know that you do after school activities, how do you cope with music, after school activities and homework at the same time?**

I have a timetable for each week with a time for homework and music practice as well.

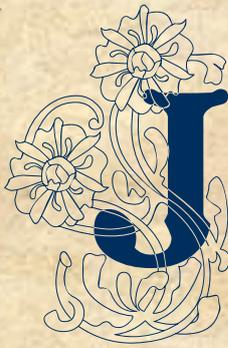
**Is there any advice that you would like to give to anyone who is interested in doing sport, multiple instruments and coping with homework at the same time?**

I would say to create a timetable to organise your time since it has helped me a lot this year with all my activities.



**Myron Wong**

**Interviewed by Euan Healey**



# JACK WHITE:

## *THIRD MAN,*

## *SEVENTH SON*

Mr Jack White III has been very busy in the past two years. For example, in 2011, in an odd sandwich of madness, irony and probable boredom, he produced an Insane Clown Posse “adaptation” of a Mozart composition. Beyond the Juggalo subculture, however, his record company, Third Man Records, played host to the seventy-seven year old “The Killer” Jerry Lee Lewis, and White produced a record by Rockabilly Queen Wanda Jackson, *The Party Ain’t Over*. Oh, and *The White Stripes*, the Detroit garage rock band formed by White and his “sister”, came to the official end of their musical career together. It was a very sad time, but the silver lining of a probable Jack White solo album on the horizon dampened the pain a little bit. Surely enough, the album, *Blunderbuss*, saw release in April 2012, provoking considerable interest. How could he follow up from the simple majesty of the Stripes? Is that someone else on *Love Interruption*, or is he pulling a *Danger! High Voltage* on us again? Why did it take so many *Raconteurs*, *Dead Weather* and *Dangermouse* albums to get to this point? Can he really eat sixteen saltine crackers?

In short: 1. He does, sort of. 2. It was revealed to be Ruby Amanfu, an invaluable part of his backing band. 3. I suppose he wanted to divorce himself from the *White Stripes* to make *Blunderbuss* seem like less of a “side-project”, something which plagued the *Raconteurs* and the *Dead Weather*’s releases. 4. And... who can say? Jack White is a pretty odd guy.



With regards to the real question though, and the release itself: it is no *White Stripes* album. It isn’t even a *Dead Weather* record; in many ways the most Jack White that Jack White has ever gotten (guitars that sound like they are being stabbed, fuzzy bass guitars, screechy pale people on vocals, etc.). The “Jack White” we thought we knew, Detroit’s own upholstering punk-blues vampire, is only

visible sporadically throughout Blunderbuss album, replaced by the Nashville-tailored, professional session man with an affinity for country music (though he still looks to be a few weeks away from a case of rickets) . Despite this, Blunderbuss is still an explosive album, from the aforementioned Sixteen Saltines, a sort of “what if Nigel Tufnel did The Hardest Button to Button”, and I’m Shakin’, a Little Willie John cover that would impress even all six of the Little Willie John purists in the world. Even though these songs harken back to the musician’s younger days, White admirably distances himself from his own worst enemy, The White Stripes, and in doing so reveals an arranging talent far beyond the three-channel mixes of old, making full use of the Nashville sessions band. It is a thoroughly decent piece in its own right, and an even better example of a first album (even though it isn’t really).

Ultimately, a thoroughly decent studio album simply doesn’t turn over profit anymore – its true strength comes from whether it can be taken on the road. I hypothesise that Blunderbuss is strong enough a release to sell tickets, but I say this ignoring the reasons why most people (including me) paid to see Jack White’s recent tour – the prospect of White Stripes songs (and the odd Dead Weather and Raconteurs tune for good measure). It is silly to suggest that a large-scale tour could be propped up by one album, and even sillier to suggest that Jack White ignore his back catalogue of modern classics, but what the audience desire, and what Mr White seems to be providing, is a mostly White Stripes retrospective with some solo stuff. To be sure, Hotel Yorba, Black Math and Steady as She Goes qualified as concert highlights far more than any of the solo tracks, but closing the show with Seven Nation Army made it seem like White was trying too hard to please the audience, and the almost forced intensity of it had me longing for something that he wanted to play. Take the reconstructed Hank Williams song You Know That I Know, which was so likeable not just for it being a good old-fashioned country love song, but also because Jack White and his band were clearly enjoying performing it just as much as the audience loved watching it. The same can be said for the Nashville-ised version of Conan O’Brien’s and my own favourite White Stripes song, We’re Going to be Friends, proving that White can both stick to his roots and reinterpret and progress as a musician. It’s just a shame that, for all their merits, many of the covers of his old bands sounded basically the same as they did on record (though I won’t deny the opening performance of Black Math was pretty intense). Overall, despite this picky critical nonsense, it was a good concert, worth the money I paid, its shortcomings overshadowed simply by how good White and his band are at what they do. The added surprise of Willy Moon as a support act (imagine a sort of Hip-Hop Buddy Holly) and an apparently Amish road crew sweetened the whole experience. Once Jack White’s solo career grows in size and depth, these shows will be something truly special – he needs only write songs as anthemic (at least!) as his output with other bands. Can he do it? Not many can top the White Stripes, but I’m sure that of those who are willing and able to, Jack White’s odds rank pretty good. The follow up to Blunderbuss has no excuse to be anything short of a classic.



[Listen Now: Jack White - Setlist](#)

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# RADIO

# STATION



KE Aston Radio is a radio service for members of our school community, produced and presented by students. The short programmes are varied and include topical in-depth current affair discussions, interviews with teachers, students or guests along with up-to-date reports on a range of sporting activities.

*Listen now*

The radio station can be accessed via the link on the home page of the school's web site [www.keaston.bham.sch.uk](http://www.keaston.bham.sch.uk) or by entering <http://radio.keaston.bham.sch.uk> in your browser.

Having launched the initial prototype the team is looking forward to developing and expanding the

content and in the near future, we are hoping to include productions from the music department, curriculum content, and news reports as well as covering events throughout the school calendar.

**Mrs Blakemore**  
= head of KE  
Aston Radio





# DREAM TEAM



Mr Downing's All Time Premier League Dream Team



# STUDENT

# COUNCIL

It's official! We now have lockers in our school, and though the credit must go to the perseverance of previous Student Councils, this change is the perfect spring-board for this year's council.

We are intent on tackling the issues that most affect students on a day to day basis and so have focused our efforts this year on 3 main objectives.

Firstly the school website is in definite need of refreshing, as much as I'd like to see a picture of Aston boys who left several years ago I think it's time we adjust the design and give the website more contemporary look. The technicians have been approached and given a basic outline which was then given to more creative students in the school to expand and modify the design to make it an easy to manoeuvre, aesthetically pleasing website; one that can challenge that of the VLE.

Elsewhere we have set our sights on solving the issue of a librarian. After long serving reliable Ms Ross left, the issue of librarian wasn't fully addressed. With Year 11 librarians being thrust into a role where they struggled to cope on top of their GCSE's. The council will ensure the librarian post will be addressed and the Year 11's will be given the support they require.

Our last target is a project in which we will profile the charity we will support in that half-term. Too often is the case that students pay for non-school uniform blissfully unaware of the charity that their money is supporting, this is despite the tremendous assembly by the student council in the prior week! Our project will involve assembly themes based upon the principles of the charity we are supporting and a form period lesson providing additional information. This will be backed up with posters around the school. Crucially, collection for the charity would last the entire half term maximising the money we raise and providing the opportunity to allow students to run events or fundraising activities to raise further awareness and money.

Two years ago the Student Council sat with Mr Hedley and evaluated the school safe route, eventually re-designing the safe route to the one we currently have now, a move which was highly popular across the year groups. Ultimately if the will of the students is there, then we can make a change; we are a glorified pressure group who can influence change.

**Bahez Talabani - Year 12**



# 34 THE VERY REAL

# VIRTUAL

# LEARNING

# ENVIRONMENT

As you will all know, one of the biggest developments in how you're going to learn at Aston has been made with the introduction of a Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle. The term, if you're ever competing in the technology round in a pub quiz, stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment.

Moodle was created in 2002 and has revolutionised learning all over the world ever since; universities are using it, as are many schools, and we have joined that group of forward-looking educational institutions this year by implementing it.

Moodle is all about enriching learning and making things easier for you, but those sorts of terms and ideas are banded around a bit, so let's look at some of the specifics without the unwarranted cynicism that is so typical of students. A cynicism, may I add, I am more than guilty of myself!

So let's take an example of when Moodle is going to be able to help you:

Imagine you're doing a homework sheet, it is due in tomorrow and you are struggling. You just wish you had remembered what your teacher said in their presentation earlier in the week. Imagine then, that the presentation is on Moodle and you could - in less than a minute - log in, download it and then complete your homework. Moodle gives you access to a wide range of resources that teachers can easily upload.

*Check out KE  
Aston Moodle*



Imagine then you've lost the sheet or, as does happen sometimes, your dog ate it with fava beans and a nice chianti. Well, with Moodle you can just download a new one, or possibly one day even submit it online.

Moodle offers a host of other features: SIMS access so you can see your achievement points and timetable, discussion forums so you can focus and articulate arguments more accurately than in a debate, submission of work and direction for research. Everyone recognises that some of these features are going to take a while for school to adapt to but, when it does, it will be worth it.

Ultimately, it is about making Moodle work best for you. Ensuring that it enriches your learning, solves problems you have and achieves what it has done in other institutions. That's why it's been the job of the Senior Research Team throughout 2012-2013 to monitor Moodle and find out what works best. Some of you will have been in focus groups and most of you will have filled out at least one questionnaire. We've been investigating how Moodle can best be implemented to help the students – even help the staff too – and our recommendations will be passed to Senior Staff and the School Governors.

Moodle is new and exciting, but it will take time before we, as a school, can utilise its full potential. We need to understand how best to make it work for this school and you. So I ask you have an open-minded approach and patience, keep checking Moodle for updates and just have a nose around the site to see what you can get from it.

**Jack Drury = Y12**  
**Senior Research Team Leader**



# ENGLISH

# FOOTBALL



The Premier League is a highly competitive league with some of the best clubs and players from around Europe and indeed the World. We have had some of the biggest names play in this country such as David Beckham and Alan Shearer (not to mention world-class imports such as David Silva and Eden Hazard).

Nevertheless, so far this European season in the Champions League hasn't exactly been the best for our clubs with the current reigning champions Chelsea only sitting third in their group and relying on results elsewhere

for them to progress any further.

Arsenal just made the next round by 1 point when we might have expected them to qualify comfortably from a relatively easy group. The biggest disappointment by far was the champions of England, Manchester City. They finished bottom of their group leaving them without any further European matches to play this season, but they did have the hardest group by far, so perhaps we shouldn't be too harsh on them. Only Manchester United showed the European big boys what they can do, their performances had an air of confidence about them. They were the first team to qualify as winners of their group after a maximum 12 out of 12 points from their first four games. They did have an easy group, so this should have been expected although they have slipped up before with high expectations on their shoulders.

However, there may be an excuse for some of these dismal performances with the top teams concentrating on fighting it out for the Premier League title. The Premier League has conjured up many surprises in its past but this year many people have been shocked by West Bromwich's start to the season, being placed as high as third. But the top three is almost certainly going to be Chelsea, Manchester City and Manchester United. I predict that United will take their revenge over City and clinch the title with Chelsea finishing in third. I also predict that Tottenham will round off the Champions League spots by coming fourth, with Arsenal, Everton and West Bromwich close behind in fifth, sixth and seventh respectively. Sunderland, Swansea, Liverpool, West Ham, Stoke, Norwich, Fulham and Newcastle should all be comfortable mid-table but not necessarily in that order. I think that Wigan and Aston Villa will survive the relegation battle meaning that Southampton, QPR and Reading will be relegated. The

golden boot will also be highly contested but I think that Robin Van Persie will snatch it from Sergio Aguero. I think that other contenders may include Demba Ba, Michu, Luiz Suarez and Lukas Podolski.

Closer to home the local clubs may have varying seasons, with Aston Villa just avoiding relegation with star men Christian Benteke and Darren Bent leading the way to survival. Birmingham should finish mid-table with their own top scorer named as Marlon King and one for the future, Nathan Redmond, showing his future worth and potential. After being relegated to the Championship last season Wolves will have an up hill struggle to get back to the Premier League but former Man United youngster Sylvan Ebanks-Blake leading the way for the chase to promotion and defensive veteran Jody Craddock holding the defensive firm. Many of you may not realise that Coventry used to be one of the top teams in the country, a decade or so ago, but nowadays they spend their time playing in League One. Currently they are struggling and may even be relegated again but they should be able to survive with forward David McGoldrick getting the goals and former Hull City player Kevin Kilbane holding the midfield together.

Liam Perkins - Year 9

Predictions made: 07/12/12



# SPOT THE TEACHER

# ON SKY SPORTS



See answer





# SPORTS YOU SHOULD TRY

## Squash

The basic principle is to keep hitting the ball against the front wall until your opponent cannot get it back any more. Players must keep one foot in the service box as they serve. The ball must hit the front wall between the service line and the out line, and land in the area behind the short line on the opposite side of the court. For the remainder of the rally, players must hit the wall above the board and below the out line. The ball is only allowed to hit the floor once before each shot, but it can hit as many walls as the player

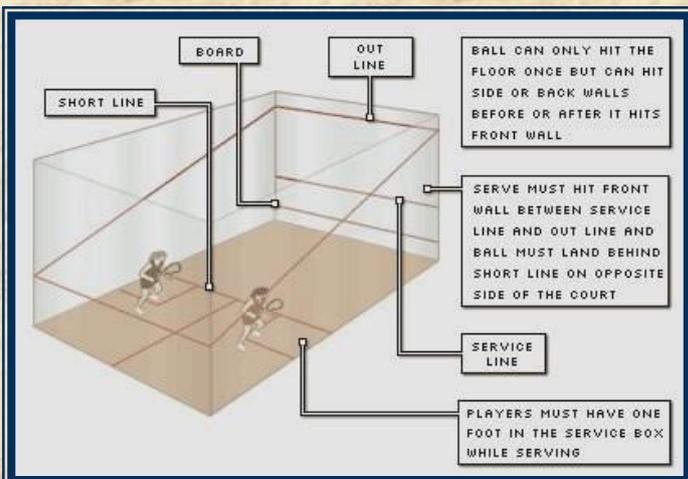


loses the rally. If a player fails to hit the ball before it bounces twice, hits the ball into the floor before it hits the front wall, or hits it outside the out line, then they

lose the rally. A player can also lose a rally if the ball hits them or their clothing before they strike the ball.

### Did you know?

According to Forbes magazine, squash is the worlds healthiest sport!



## Handball

If I was to guess how many people played handball, and really enjoyed it then I would guess at a very low number. My reason being that at Aston we mainly follow rugby, football and cricket. Yet we have completely ignored the second most common sport in Europe. We don't play it in games or PE, at least not until years 11-13. But it is a really good, fun, enjoyable sport, and I strongly recommend you at least try it once. Even if you don't want to play seriously.

At the magic London Olympics Lord Sebastian Coe said 'When our time came. We did it right.' Unfortunately for the men's GB Olympic handball team this was not the case. For the first time ever they lost all three of their group matches. Here

at Aston we are at a Sports College, so if you were to train really hard and make it to the GB Men's Olympic Handball team, who knows, perhaps in the 2020 or 2024 Olympic games YOU could be out there winning another Olympic medal for Team GB.

**Did you know?  
That Handball is the  
second most played  
sport in Europe!**



Why not do a search for some local Handball clubs?

## Sailing

Through sailing Sir Ben Ainslie has become one of the greatest British Olympians ever. At London 2012 he won his 3rd Olympic Gold Medal. Due to his achievements over the years he has led Britain to sailing success in London 2012 and has been knighted by the Queen. Could be you if you really tried and wanted to?

Not all sailing is about racing and winning for the trophies and medals. There are other forms of sailing. There are cruising and recreational types as well, which are more for fun than for competition.

**Did you know?  
There is a sailing  
club which YOU  
could join in  
Edgbaston and  
Bearwood.**



Joseph Burns - Year 8



# SPORTS INTERVIEW

## ALEX HUGHES

### How long have you been sailing?

I started sailing with my father when I was three years of age.

### What do you enjoy most about the sport?

The sense of freedom; I enjoy the feeling that you can do what you want and that nobody has control of what you do.

### How often do you go sailing?

Normally I go sailing every weekend but in the summer I also go on Wednesday evenings.

### What are the challenges in this sport?

One of the main challenges you face when you start is knowing where the wind is coming from and what you have to do to make sure the boat goes forward.

### Do you compete in this sport?

Yes, in my last event, the winter regatta, I came 4th out of 155 contenders. The event was at Weymouth National Sailing Academy.



### Would you recommend sailing as a sport? Why?

I would definitely recommend sailing as a sport as it is great fun and you meet lots of new people.

Alex Hughes  
Interview by Joseph Burns

# BRAIN

## TEASERS

By moving one of the following digits, make the equation correct:  $62 - 63 = 1$



What is special about the following sequence of numbers? 8 5 4 9 1 7 6 10 3 2 0



*See the answer*

You are the bus driver. At your first stop, you pick up 29 people. On your second stop, 18 of those 29 people get off, and at the same time 10 new passengers arrive. At your next stop, 3 of those 10 passengers get off, and 13 new passengers come on. On your fourth stop 4 of the remaining 10 passengers get off, 6 of those new 13 passengers get off as well, then 17 new passengers get on. What is the colour of the bus driver's eyes?



There are three houses; one is red, one is blue and one is white. If the red house is to the left of the house in the middle and the blue house is to the right to the house in the middle where is the white house?

If a hen and a half will lay an egg and a half in a day and a half, how many eggs would six hens lay at the same rate in six days?



What is the smallest integer, which, when multiplied by 2 gives a number consisting of only 8's?

Imagine that you are building a tower of play bricks. A yellow brick is 19 millimetres tall and a green brick is 21 millimetres tall. How many of each are required to build a tower that is exactly 562 millimetres tall?



*“Brought to you by the letter... e”*

